

AETC News Clips



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7 Dec 01

MySanAntonio : Metro and State

Metro and State

Veterans gather at the Pacific War Museum to remember the attack and the friends they lost

By Sig Christenson

Express-News Military Writer

Web Posted : 12/07/2001 12:00 AM

FREDERICKSBURG — Garth Sawyers walked alone in the museum, images of a scratchy black-and-white newsreel fresh in his mind, a World War II torpedo bomber on display nearby.

An Army veteran of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, Sawyers came from his home in St. George, Utah, to the Texas Hill Country knowing the journey would stir memories, but perhaps not quite prepared for the emotional impact.

"I think mostly about the people that were killed," Sawyers said of his visit Thursday to the National Museum of the Pacific War here. "It reminds you of the saddest day of your life."

Today is the 60th anniversary of the attack, but it might as well have been yesterday for 300 veterans who toured the museum along with Sawyers. Former President George Bush is to speak here today at 11:30 a.m. in observance of the 1941 attack.

On Thursday, Sawyers and many other Pearl Harbor veterans walked the two blocks north of the museum to take the first tours of the new Pacific Combat Zone and the PT Boat Exhibition. Now 80, he identified the old Army half-track, jeep and cargo truck outside the entrance to the museum addition with the enthusiasm of a man greeting long-lost friends.

Sawyers' memories were sparked by museum footage from a 1943 newsreel. He and 23 other veterans and their families sat quietly, while on film, President Franklin D. Roosevelt predicted victory, telling a cheering crowd the Axis powers "have asked for it and they're going to get it."

America abruptly entered the war at 7:55 a.m. Dec. 7, 1941, when the first wave of Japanese planes swept low over Pearl Harbor, shattering a tranquil tropical morning in Hawaii.

In the moments that followed, the base was consumed by the cacophony of roaring planes, exploding bombs and acrid, black clouds of smoke billowing from the Navy's Battleship Row.

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Veterans ... cont'd

The sneak attack stunned the United States. In all, 19 ships were sunk or damaged, 2,408 Americans were killed and another 1,178 wounded. Japan lost 29 aircraft and five midget submarines and 64 were killed.

"I had a good view," said George Duke, 80, of Jackson, Miss. "I got the hell scared out of me."

He wasn't alone.

Roy W. Gillette was a young second lieutenant whose soldiers downed a Japanese plane trying to strafe them as they headed to the Army's Hickam Field.

"I really think about the guys that were at Hickam there (who) got killed," Gillette, 82, of Fair Oaks Ranch said as he walked past shops and restaurants on Fredericksburg's Main Street with his wife, Eileen.

"After the second attack, my group and I went over and started taking wounded people to the hospital — and the dead ones, of course — and stacked them up at the hospital," he said. "But you know, you get to thinking about that and what they did to us. And no way in the world that I forgive them what they did."

Anger is a common emotion among Pearl Harbor veterans. So, too, is guilt.

Warren Miller, 77, of Omaha, Neb., saw the war from the first to the last, serving aboard the ill-fated USS Utah at Pearl Harbor. Four years later, he watched the Japanese surrender from the deck of the USS Detroit.

He refuses to buy Japanese cars and grows red-faced with frustration and resentment when other veterans of the war do, saying Tokyo "tried their best to do away with us and now we are supporting them."

Duke, a radioman assigned to a PBY flying boat, dived into a ditch to avoid the low-flying Japanese planes as they strafed Ford Island, where he was stationed. He then jumped into a plane and started firing at the enemy aircraft, an action that earned a commendation.

"I really kind of felt guilty being here because I'm alive and a lot of guys are out there 6 (feet) under a white cross," said Duke, a retired Shell Oil. Co. executive who recently marked his 59th wedding anniversary with his wife, Shirley.

"Why was I lucky enough to not get killed when a lot of my friends were?" he asked. "I have not come up with an answer. I don't think it's a celestial intervention by God. I don't know why. Why do things happen in this world? I don't know."

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DEVON RAVINE/ASSOCIATED PRESS

Lt. Gen. Maxwell Bailey pins a Purple Heart on Staff Sgt. Michael during a ceremony Thursday in Fort Walton Beach, Fla.

Wounded airman gets Purple Heart

ASSOCIATED PRESS

HURLBURT FIELD, Fla. — An Air Force sergeant who was injured in the action against the Taliban in Afghanistan received a Purple Heart on Thursday.

The airman, a combat controller named Michael whose last name wasn't disclosed for security reasons, received the medal from Lt. Gen. Maxwell Bailey, commander of the Air Force Special Operations Command, in front of about 300 colleagues, relatives and friends.

Michael, of Oxford, Conn., suffered two perforated eardrums and a scratched cornea when a U.S. bomb hit near American troops during an uprising by Taliban prisoners at a fortress outside of Mazar-e-Sharif on Nov. 26.

He was the first Air Force member injured during the conflict; four Army soldiers

also were hurt in the uprising.

"The true heroes are the American people who have continued on with their lives following the tragic events of Sept. 11, especially the firefighters, police officers and the family members of every soldier, sailor, airman and Marine supporting Operation Enduring Freedom," Michael said after the ceremony.

Michael is assigned to the 23rd Special Tactics Squadron at Hurlburt Field. He enlisted more than eight years ago as a medical technician and trained as a combat controller.

Combat controllers are certified air traffic controllers specialized in unconventional missions. They can set up small radar and communication sites to guide aircraft for landings on makeshift runways.

They're among the first troops to be deployed to restricted areas.

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MySanAntonio : Military

Military

On-base rapist receives 23 years in six attacks

By Karisa King

San Antonio Express-News

Web Posted : 12/07/2001 12:00 AM

- A rapist who attacked six women on military bases in San Antonio and Louisiana during a four-month spree of escalating violence was sentenced Thursday to 23 years and four months in prison.

Robert Sauri Baker, a 23-year-old civilian whose father is a former military officer, pleaded guilty in October to one count of aggravated sexual abuse, four counts of attempted aggravated sexual abuse, abusive sexual contact and credit card fraud.

Baker's sentence included an additional 18 months in prison because the crimes occurred while he was on supervised release for a previous stolen credit card conviction.

None of Baker's victims — soldiers and airmen at Fort Sam Houston and Lackland AFB and the wife of a Fort Polk, La., soldier — came to hear the punishment he received Thursday or what he had to say about the assaults.

"I should have never committed this crime. I should have just stuck with credit cards," Baker said in a rambling, matter-of-fact speech. "All of this was unnecessary."

The attacks began in September last year when Baker fondled a soldier taking a shower at Fort Sam Houston. Court documents detail how Baker continued to target women in their dormitories in a series of attempted sexual assaults, at times brandishing a knife and threatening them before the women escaped or fought off the attack.

In one case, Baker fled without his underwear, which authorities used to extract his DNA and later match it to a sample of his blood.

The assaults ended with the Jan. 12 rape of a woman at Lackland AFB who awoke to find a screwdriver pressed to her neck.

Prosecutors did not reveal how Baker was able to enter the women's quarters before surprising them, but in one case an Army private allowed him into her room after he asked to use the phone.

After the first three incidents, Baker called military police and inquired about the crime or said he was a possible witness, but refused to offer his name or make a report.

U.S. District Judge Fred Biery told Baker that he was tempted to reject the plea agreement because it allowed Baker to avoid a possible life imprisonment had a jury convicted him — an outcome that the judge deemed likely.

But Biery accepted the agreement because he said it spared the victims the pain of a trial.

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OUR TURN

America will never forget Pearl Harbor

Sixty years is a very long time, but we have not forgotten, and we never will.

We have not forgotten the waves of Japanese planes that attacked Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, 60 years ago today. We have not forgotten the 2,400 U.S. servicemen who were killed, nor the crippling of the Navy's Pacific fleet, nor the sudden plunge into World War II.

This year in particular we are filled with more than sadness about Pearl Harbor. The shock and visceral horror of that day is fresh in our minds. It mirrors the shock we felt on Sept. 11.

Sixty years ago, we learned that if the Japanese could strike Hawaii, then our borders were not safe. An entire generation was shaped by that experience, as was U.S. foreign policy.

On Sept. 11, we learned terrorists can strike the Pentagon and the World Trade Center, and our sense of security is again shattered. A new generation — and a new policy — will be shaped by Sept. 11.

If America can draw upon the strength of those who were defined by Pearl Harbor, we will get back what was lost on Sept. 11. We will get back our confidence, our optimism, our affluence, our security.

But it will not come without a fight. War is not a spectator sport. Some 15 million Americans served in the military after Pearl Harbor,

The terrorist attacks of Sept. 11 mirror the shock of the 1941 bombing of Pearl Harbor.

and many of them lined up to join the morning after the attack.

Everyone sacrificed something: Some gave up jobs at home to go to war; others went without material items; and many paid the ultimate sacrifice — their life or the life a loved one.

As we are finding out in the post-Sept. 11 world, sacrifice is easier to talk about than it is to do. As the casualties of the war in Afghanistan mount and bloody images from the war come across our television screen, we would do well to remember the resolve of the World War II generation. The war against terrorism will get harder before it gets easier.

The common lesson of both Pearl Harbor and Sept. 11 is that America is not — and has never been — an island to itself. Even after war stops consuming every aspect of American domestic life, we must vigilantly stay involved in foreign affairs to win back our own peace.

As both Pearl Harbor and Sept. 11 proved, we are all internationalists now.



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FOCUS: DEC. 7, 1941



MARK J. TERRILL/ASSOCIATED PRESS

Pearl Harbor survivor Herbert Buehl and his grandson salute during a ceremony in Honolulu. A reader notes similarities between that attack and Sept. 11.

Always remember

I just read the article on Japan buying \$1.5 million worth of scrap iron left from Desert Storm ("Highway of Death's scrap to see new life," Monday).

I remember as a kid when we gathered all the scrap iron we could find to sell to Japan. Then I remembered how bad I felt on Dec. 7, 1941, when I realized what they had done with it and that I had helped in a small way.

I just want to say, "Remember Pearl Harbor!"

— Troy Wilson

History was repeated

I hope you enjoyed peacetime, because now that time is over. My mind turns to the coincidences between the attacks of Dec. 7, 1941, at Pearl Harbor and Sept. 11, 2001, in New York.

Both air attacks came on islands from enemies that considered sneak attacks honorable and death in battle

a path to paradise. The air attacks came in waves and were totally unexpected.

Afterward, it was clear that all the warning signs were there and that the attacks had been expected by some in the national government.

Failures in air traffic control and defense characterize the last moments before the attacks.

The attacks were recorded in all their brutality and are seen as unprovoked attacks on America. However, they also will be seen, as daring, well-planned and well-executed attacks by crafty enemies.

I do not believe in coincidences. Clearly, these attacks exploit a weakness in the way America thinks about its enemies and its vulnerabilities.

Perhaps this is a failure in the American psyche. At the very least, this is a systemic, and possibly fatal, flaw in the way America deals with threats in this world.

— Rex Tyger

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GIs' remains flown to Germany

Soldier wounded by errant bomb undergoes surgery

By DAVID McHUGH

ASSOCIATED PRESS

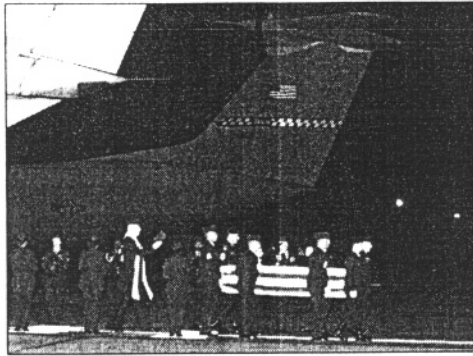
RAMSTEIN AIR BASE, Germany — The bodies of two special forces soldiers killed in Afghanistan by an errant U.S. bomb arrived late Thursday at a U.S. military base in Germany.

A soldier injured in the accident arrived earlier and underwent hours of surgery.

The C-141 transport plane carrying the Army Green Beret soldiers' remains, along with those of a sailor who died Tuesday after a fall on his ship, landed at Ramstein Air Base.

Three hearses were standing by to carry the remains to the mortuary at a nearby U.S. military hospital. An honor guard was also waiting at the airfield.

Sgt. 1st Class Daniel Petithory, 32, of Massachusetts and Staff Sgt. Brian Cody Prosser, 28, of California were two of three soldiers killed Wednesday when the 1-ton



FRANK AUGSTEIN/ASSOCIATED PRESS

The casket of an American soldier killed by an errant U.S. bomb in Afghanistan arrives Thursday at Ramstein Air Base in Germany.

bomb, intended to hit Taliban forces making their last stand near Kandahar, landed about 100 yards from their position. Six Afghan anti-Taliban fighters also died.

One of the 20 U.S. soldiers wounded in the accident arrived earlier Thursday at the military hospital, the Landstuhl Regional Medical Center.

The soldier, who wasn't identified, underwent four to five hours of surgery by orthopedic and neurosurgeons, said Maj. Mark Ervin, a surgeon at the hospital.

"The patient has been returned to the intensive care unit and remains in a guarded condition," Ervin said. "It will be 48 to 72 hours before we have a firm grasp on his prognosis."

Arrangements were being made to bring another 14 of the injured to Landstuhl today, said Lt. Col. Ed Loomis, a spokesman for U.S. European Command.

All but three of the Americans wounded in the bombing accident were evacuated, first to a U.S. Marine base south of Kandahar and then out of Afghanistan. The injuries to the 17 taken outside of Afghanistan "vary from moderate to severe," a statement from U.S. Central Command said.

It was unclear when the remains of those killed would be flown home and whether the remains of the third U.S. soldier killed, Master Sgt. Jefferson Donald Davis, 39, of Tennessee would be brought to Germany.

Meanwhile, eighteen Afghan anti-Taliban fighters injured in the incident were being treated on U.S. Navy ships in the Arabian Sea, the statement said. Eight were on the USS Peleliu and 10 aboard the USS Bataan.

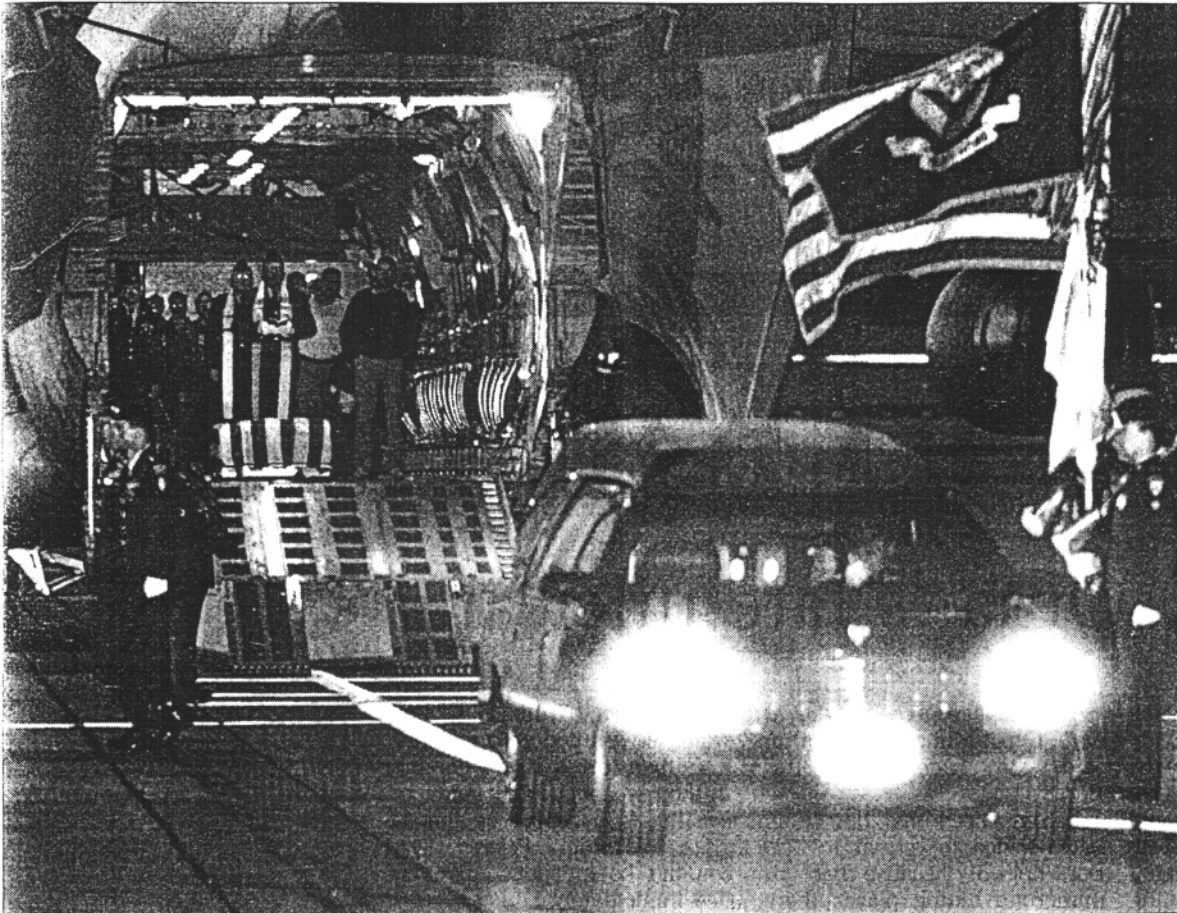
The sailor was identified as Fireman Apprentice Michael Jakes Jr., 20, of New York. Loomis said he died Tuesday of head injuries suffered in a fall from his bunk on the carrier USS Kitty Hawk.

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NEWS SUMMARY



RALPH ORLOWSKI/ASSOCIATED PRESS

FINAL TRANSPORT: A hearse waits for the coffin of an American soldier as it arrives at Ramstein Air Base in Germany. The remains of two soldiers killed in Afghanistan by an errant U.S. bomb arrived Thursday at the base.

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Crash of F-16 in July traced to bolt failure

Loss of air seal caused fire in rear of Luke fighter jet

By David Madrid
The Arizona Republic

Air Force inspectors have determined that a crash that destroyed a \$19.2 million Luke Air Force Base F-16 on July 23 was caused by the failure of two quarter-inch bolts.

Whether the bolts used to fasten an inner air seal in the low-pressure turbine were defective or were improperly tightened and worked their way loose is unknown.

The Oklahoma City Air Logistics Center depot where the fasteners were installed is evaluating the cause of the bolt failure.

Regardless, the air seal worked its way loose and led to the jet fighter's drive shaft bending, the engine seizing and fragments from the turbine piercing a fuel tank and igniting the fuel.

The pilot, Maj. Robert P. Egan, was on his way to the Barry M. Goldwater Air Force Range, southwest of Gila Bend, to conduct air to ground maneuvers when he heard an explosion in the back of the aircraft. He told investigators the jet fighter began to vibrate so violently that he couldn't read his instruments and, at one point, his hand was knocked off the throttle.

Egan safely ejected from the jet after a fellow pilot radioed him and told him the plane was on fire.

"The aircraft did not compare to any simulator I've had in my 16 years of Air Force service," he told investigators.

azcentral.com

View photos and videos of U.S. military equipment at terror.azcentral.com.

"The aircraft shook more violently by 10 to 12 times than any simulator I've been in before."

The crash, which occurred about 57 miles southwest of Luke near the Eagletail Mountains, was the 10th crash of a Luke F-16 since October 1998, though there was a 13-month period between the ninth and 10th crashes.

While the low-pressure turbines have been a trouble spot for F-16s, causing several accidents around the country and at least one accident at Luke, the July incident was the first that involved the air seal fasteners.

Luke is the largest F-16 training base in the world, with more than 200 F-16 Fighting Falcon jets taking off and landing each day.

Reach the reporter at david.madrid@arizonarepublic.com or (602) 444-6926.

MILITARY PROFILE: SASHA BUEHLER

Sasha Buehler enjoyed growing up in Moultrie, Ga., but she had no intentions of staying there for the rest of her life.

Buehler wanted a glimpse at what else the world had to offer.

So she joined the U.S. Air Force under the delayed entry program when she was a senior in high school. "I wanted to explore the world. I wanted to get out of

Moultrie and find a good job. I knew the Air Force could provide that," she said.

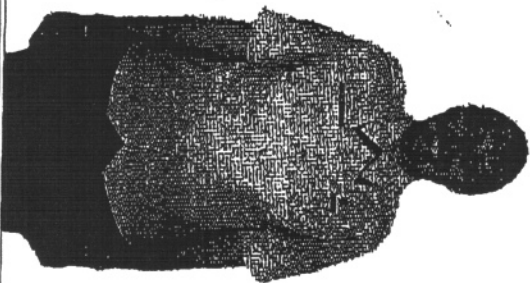
Four months after graduating from Colquitt County High School, Buehler officially became a member of the Air Force. Buehler, who has been stationed at Maxwell-Gunter Air Force Base for two years, is an aeromedical technician at the Maxwell Ambulatory Clinic. The Altman 1st Class is

married to David Willis, whom she met while in high school.

Buehler, 21, said she has no regrets about her decision to join the military. "I'm happy," she said.

In her spare time, Buehler likes to play softball, watch professional wrestling, play pool, spend time with her husband and visit family and friends in Moultrie.

— Kim Williams-Neil



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Vance seen as vital to Enid's economy

► Base pumps \$200 million into local economy

By Robert Barron
Staff Writer

In 1995, Vance Air Force Base contributed more than \$100 million directly to the economy of Enid. In the last six years, that number doubled as a result of more jobs and higher salaries.

Economic development

officials say the direct impact of Vance is \$200 million per year pumped into the Enid area economy through payroll and purchases.

Mike Gopher, Enid school superintendent, says the school district will see a small price tag if it helps

keep the air force flying hundreds of planes per day in and out of nearby Vance.

This year, the pilot training base on the south edge of Enid provided 3,541 jobs, paying

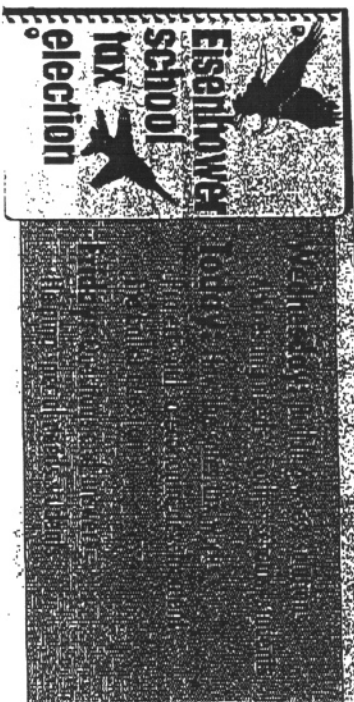


Many improvements are needed throughout Eisenhower Elementary to update the classrooms to 21st Century teaching requirements. (Staff Photo by CHRIS LANDSBERGER)

EISENHOWER TAXING VANCE'S CHANCES

VANCE AFB OK
The Enid News & Eagle, December 6, 2001

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EISENHOWER ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PROJECT SUMMARY

New addition	\$393,850
• Includes 3 classrooms and new ADA accessible restroom	
Renovation to existing building	\$275,389
• Restrooms	• New ceilings
• New heat and air conditioning	• New floor coverings
• New windows	• New inside trim
Technology	\$ 56,494
• Computers & internet access	
Remove 8 portables	\$ 20,000
Contingency and architect fees	\$ 84,267
GRAND TOTAL	\$830,000*

*City of Enid will pay \$700,000; Enid Public School will pay \$130,000

Enid's sales tax will not increase. This proposal extends a one-quarter percent sales tax for about 7 months beginning in April 2002. The tax will expire when \$700,000 is collected, but no later than December 31, 2002.

VANCE

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about \$100 million in wages and salaries, said Mike Cooper, a former Enid mayor and member of the Vance Development Authority. By comparison, the second-largest employer, Advance Food, has about 950 employees in the Enid area, Advance President Greg Allen said.

Losing the base would be a devastating blow for Enid, Cooper said. He estimated nearly 3,000 people would leave the community almost overnight because relatively few other jobs in Enid are as good as those at Vance.

For that and other reasons, Cooper supports the Eisenhower School sales tax question going before voters Tuesday.

Vance families contribute between 10 percent and 12 percent of the overall Enid tax base and

purchases. The loss of that many jobs would result in other businesses closing and possibly other families leaving town, he said.

"From January to May, business in Enid depends on people who work at Vance in the public and private sector," Cooper said.

The loss of jobs would also result in the loss of students in Enid and area school systems.

In addition to the direct economic impact, Cooper said, more than \$50 million in military construction projects have been completed in the past year. Military construction over a 10-year period totals between \$80 million and \$100 million.

What would the loss of Vance do to Enid?

"Think catastrophic," said Tom Blankenship, president of the

Greater Enid Chamber of Commerce.

If those jobs were lost, the city could come back, but no one knows how long it would take.

"We would be at an economic standstill for a long time," Cooper said.

Blankenship called it a "10-year period of trauma" and compared it to the oil bust of the late 1970s and early 1980s.

"Enid is still underemployed. We've never regained those middle management positions. We still haven't regained those jobs," Blankenship said.

Average salaries at Vance are between \$38,000 and \$40,000 a year, generally higher than average pay at other companies in the area who also have fewer employees.

The Eisenhower dilemma

► It seems the problem is how to pay for improvements

By Tania Ward
Staff Writer

Sheri Kline has sent four children through Eisenhower Elementary School. Her youngest is still there, and she has never liked the portables.

Kline is one of many people not happy about the portables that house students at the school located by Vance Air Force Base. They are seen as the last remaining black mark left over from the 1995 base closure process and one that certainly will be a sore thumb for the community and Vance when another round of base closings happens.

To address the problem, a six- to seven-month extension to the quarter-cent StarTek economic development sales tax has been proposed. Voters will decide Tuesday if they want to pitch in \$700,000 in city funds for improvements to the school.

Kline's family is non-military, but they live in the Eisenhower district. She fears her children aren't safe should a tornado come through town. There also have been snakes and skunks to contend with, she said. When the wind blows hard, it shakes the flimsy metal school buildings.

"I would be absolutely thrilled to see more safety

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Today: Building woes and solutions
Addressing needs of other schools, students
Thursday: The sales tax
School tax vital to economic development
The ballot question
Friday: Questions and answers

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DILEMMA

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out there for our children," she said.

While many Enid residents agree that improving the condition of Eisenhower is important and necessary, what they don't agree on is how the improvements should be funded or if they should be set apart from the rest of the school district's needs rather than being part of a larger, comprehensive plan to fix all schools.

Jim Coleman of Enid said he is concerned that a sales tax means everybody pays but only Eisenhower benefits from the improvements. He said a property tax for those living in the district might be more appropriate.

"If a sales tax is an answer to help schools, then I am all for it, but all the schools need to benefit," he said.

No one is talking about the needs of other school districts, Coleman said, or about getting students out of the portables by moving special needs students to other schools.

"There are plenty of (buildings) within the school system itself where we can put these kiddos," Coleman said.

If approved, the sales tax will cover improvements to the school, including the elimination of the eight portables, the addition of three new classrooms, another restroom and a variety of other improvements. Enid Public Schools will contribute an additional \$130,000 to the \$700,000 raised by the sales tax.

The project was originally slated for \$1.7 million but was scaled back when the decision was made to move the 30-some special needs students to other schools in the district.

According to Kem Keithly, Enid Public Schools superintendent, the project also will include replacement of all the single pane windows with Thermapane windows as well technological advancements.

Eisenhower does have a great deal of the technology already in place, said Principal Karen Heizer. The school is full of new computers, but they need software.

Additional technology upgrades will mean the upper grades will have computers in their class-

rooms, and teachers will have additional equipment for alternative teaching methods.

If the tax is approved, the school district will have the money in March and the bidding process can begin. Law requires that the money be in hand before bidding. The hope, Keithly said, is to begin construction in mid-May.

The renovation, said Todd Earl, chairman of the "Yes Vance, Yes Schools, Yes Enid" campaign, will bring Eisenhower into the 21st century.

This solution addresses the long-term needs of Eisenhower and is being proposed at approximately half of the original estimated cost due to operational changes, he said. The plan also will accommodate future expansion of the school should that become necessary.

The administration and the teachers at Eisenhower have done a great job of making the present facilities as efficient as possible, Earl said.

"It's time to repay those efforts," he said.

The children housed in portables spend three-quarter of their day there, Heizer. There are approximately 220 children enrolled at the school, and two-thirds attend classes in the eight

portable units south of the main building.

Jon Blankenship, president and chief executive officer of the Greater Enid Chamber of Commerce, said Eisenhower is clearly the school most in need of capital improvements. They need to be made whether or not there is another round of base closings.

"This proposal is a progressive, cost-effective solution for Eisenhower," he said.

Kay Henderson, who has been teaching at Eisenhower for 28 years, said the portables have been there as long.

"One of the biggest things is the noise level," she said.

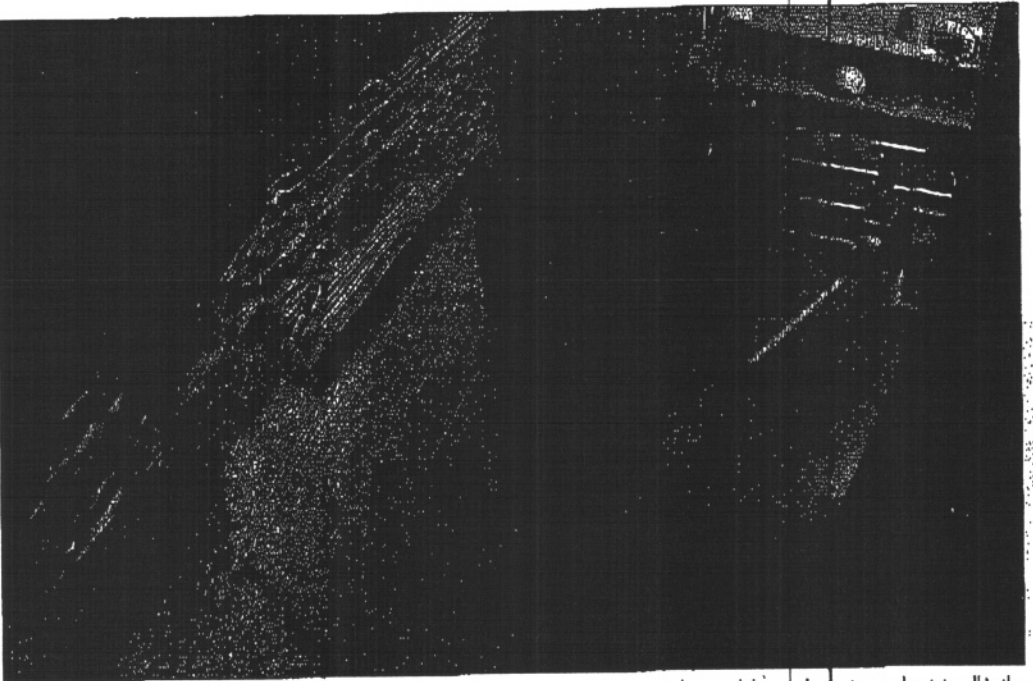
That means stopping her lessons and waiting as the jets fly over, and sometimes shouting over the sound of the heating and air conditioning.

"Having been in the building and in the portables," Henderson said, "I see the difference."

The excessive noise disrupts the learning process every day, Heizer said.

Eisenhower was built in the 1960s, she said, with no major renovating or remodeling since then, except for improvements made as part of a bond issue passed in 1997. Roof replacement, electrical improvements and computer needs

An Eisenhower Elementary School student plays with a hockey stick in the storage facility under a termite-infested portion of the wall that is exposed after insects destroyed the wood covering on the stairwall in the school's gym. (Staff Photo by CHRIS LANDSBERGER)



were made then, she said, but the portables have caused a variety of problems for teachers and students over the years.

They had to move the kindergartners back into the main building because they would get disoriented and not be able to find their way between buildings, Heizer said. Some children would even end up at the base gate wanting to know where the bathroom was, she said. Families have chosen not to enroll their children in Eisenhower, Heizer said, because of the portable buildings.

Also, there is little insulation, she said, and children have to go in and out to go to the bathroom in the main building. They have to leave the portables to go to the resource center, the library or to physical education and band. That means when it is cold, they have to bundle up at a minimum of five times a day to move between the buildings.

"There is a lot of time wasted," Heizer said.

In addition to that, the heating and air conditioning is impossible to regulate, Henderson said, and it is not unusual to see children in the classrooms wearing winter gloves during cold weather months.

"Learning is always going on, but we are fighting the elements," Henderson said.

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Tax seen as quick fix for school, long-term help for Vance and city

By Tanja Ward
Staff Writer

When U.S. military reviewers filled out a report card on Vance Air Force Base nearby

Eisenhower Elementary School reviews conducted in 1995, received an unsatisfactory grade.

Enid school officials want to bring up that grade — the final demerit left over from the Base Realignment and Closing

The answer, Superintendent Ken Keithly said, could come Tuesday when Enid voters will

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TAX

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be asked to approve a one-quarter percent city sales tax to raise most of the \$830,000 needed to expand and renovate Eisenhower.

Nearly 160 students at Eisenhower Elementary attend class each day in one of the school's eight portable buildings, a black mark on the city of Enid and Vance should BRAC review-ers get out their grade books again. Another BRAC review is likely, Keithly said, if not in 2003 then in 2005.

When BRAC does come around again, Keithly said, all demerits from the last review need to be addressed.

"Eisenhower is really about the only thing that needs improvement," he said.

BRAC reviewers don't require anything specific, said Mike Cooper, a former Enid mayor and member of the Vance Development Authority. They do collect data on areas such as quality of life, housing, medical services, higher education and the quality of public schools.

"All communities can do is BRAC-proof themselves as much as they can," he said.

The bases that were in poor condition already have been closed, Cooper said.

"All of the bases left are excellent bases," he said. "There really is not a lot of difference in the bases left and it will come down to a quality-of-life issue."

But the big picture concern is more than just Vance and just Eisenhower, Cooper said, it's about economic development for Enid.

"If we are going to be successful, we have got to fix our schools," Cooper said.

Schools are a community's foundation, he said, and Eisenhower is just the first step of long-range school plans.

Eisenhower's condition put it at the top of the school district's list for needed improvements.

Even another BRAC review wasn't imminent, Cooper said, Eisenhower would still be a top priority.

"To have grades one through sixth in portables is unacceptable. I don't care where it is," he said.

If voters decide yes on Tuesday to extend the one-quarter percent StarTex economic development tax for another six to seven months, Keithly said, Eisenhower will be advanced \$700,000 by the city so the school district may begin the bidding process for the major renovations and addition. That will include disposing of the eight portable buildings, adding three new permanent classrooms and an additional bathroom, plus other improvements. Enid Public Schools will contribute an additional \$130,000 toward the renovations. State law requires the money be in hand when the bidding process begins, Keithly said.

Initially the project was slated at \$1.7 million, but it was scaled back when the decision was made to relocate the special needs students.

The Eisenhower sales tax would not increase the local sales tax rate, Keithly said. It would be

a seven-month extension of the StarTex tax, which is set to expire in April 2002. The one-quarter percent tax would continue until December 2002 or until \$700,000 is raised, whichever comes first.

A majority vote is required to implement the Eisenhower tax.

Making the addition and renovations to Eisenhower is a clearly a quality-of-life issue and an economic development issue, said Todd Earl, Enid banker and chairman of the "Yes Vance Yes Schools Yes Enid" campaign.

If Eisenhower improvements help secure the future of Vance, they will have a huge economic impact.

It affects the whole region in that respect, said Jon Blankenship, president of the Greater Enid Chamber of Commerce.

Although the property tax is a more traditional funding source for school buildings, the sales tax makes sense in this situation, Keithly, Earl and Blankenship agreed.

A sales tax is appropriate because everyone living or shopping in the region benefits from Vance being in Enid, Earl said.

The pressure of a looming BRAC decision also favors a quick vote on a small, short-term sales tax for a single purpose. If the timing were right, Earl said, a larger school improvement package might have been proposed.

"Unfortunately, that is not the case here," he said.

It would be cost-prohibitive to float a school bond issue for the relatively small amount of money involved in the Eisenhower project, he said.

A sales tax, requiring a simple majority vote for approval, also is easier to pass than a property-tax-supported bond issue, which would require a super majority.

Eisenhower Principal Karen Heizer praised the joint city-school effort to fix up the school.

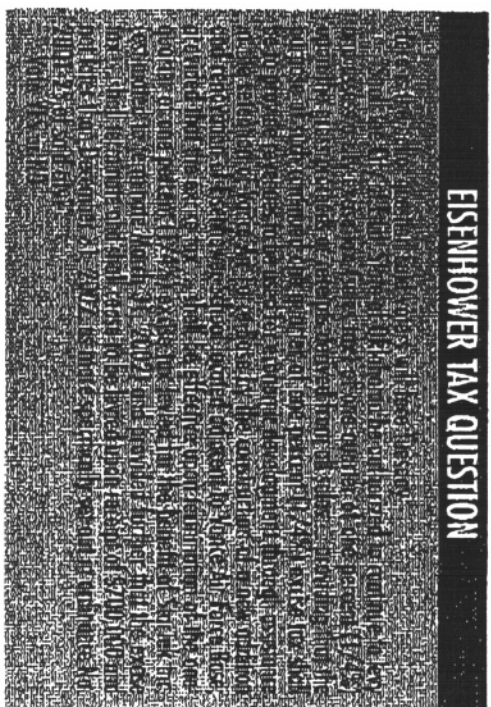
"The most powerful thing behind this whole campaign is cooperation and collaboration," she said.

"I really think if this works, the city will step forward and help other schools," she said.

The cooperative agreement doesn't stop at the city and the schools, Blankenship said. It also includes the Enid Chamber, the Vance Development Authority and Garfield County.

They all met to discuss the top funding issues, he said and there was a broad consensus on making Eisenhower the top funding issue.

"It's just in Enid's best interest to improve Eisenhower Elementary before the next round



EISENHOWER TAX QUESTION

of base closures is announced," he said.

Blankenship said they recognize that other school improvements are needed and will be addressed soon, but Eisenhower is the most time sensitive.

"It really needs to be sooner than later," he said.

Since the campaign began, Blankenship said, the feedback has been positive.

"I think people realize that we need to improve the condition of Eisenhower Elementary any way," he said.

Doing that puts the city in a better position to protect the 2,500 employees at Vance.

"It has huge economic development ramifications and we want to be on solid ground," he said.

This is a quality-of-life issue, Blankenship said, and a small price to pay to help protect Vance, Blankenship said. "In order to improve all of our schools in Enid, we've got to protect our tax base — and Vance is a critical part of our tax base."

Air Force reaches out to counselors

By Dawn Marks
Enid Bureau

ENID — Amid a recent rise in patriotism and interest in the military, Vance Air Force Base leaders told school counselors Wednesday just what their military branch offers students.

High school and junior high counselors from throughout the state toured Vance and talked with base representatives.

In the last five years, to meet demands, the Air Force has had to double the number of pilots it trains, said Col. Doug Raaberg, 71st Flying Training Wing commander.

Raaberg advised counselors to tell students interested in the military to take courses in technology, mathematics and science.

However, he said, they also should encourage students to be civic leaders by making commitments to organizations and their community, state and country. Lately, the nation has seen a resurgence of patriotism and people wanting to join the military, but learning civic leadership is just as important, he said.

"I think we're losing that," Raaberg said. "I think you ought to emphasize that to our young minds."

Bob Farrell, with Vance public affairs, said leaders thought it was necessary to provide counselors with information about the Air Force so they might encourage students to consider enlisting.

"This is an important group of people that molds kids' lives," he said.

Base representatives told counselors they joined the Air Force for many reasons, including travel, benefits and education.

Tech. Sgt. Jade Mesa, who has been in the Air Force 16 years, grew up in a military family and wanted the chance to travel. Airman 1st Class Tyler Schachter joined with a buddy when he was looking for a change.

Schachter is from Canada and is not a U.S. citizen. However, Farrell said, non-citizens can join the U.S. military if they work toward citizenship.

Staff Sgt. Dave Spears, a recruiter, wasn't interested in college right after high school, but found that if he entered the Air Force, he could travel overseas to play soccer.

Schachter attends college courses while he is stationed at Vance. His only expense is books. The other costs are paid by the city of Enid's scholarship program and the military.

For 2nd Lt. Jason Bishop, the draw was a wide range of career fields and support for his family.

Mesa told counselors they should tell young women thinking of joining the military that she gained self-respect in the Air Force.

"They don't look at your gender at all," she said.

Counselors also asked what they could tell their students about pay.

"You can live on the Air Force paycheck," Schachter said.

Spears said recruits entering the Air Force from high school can make from \$1,005 to \$1,371 a month, depending upon the number of years they enlist. They also receive benefits such as housing, insurance and health care.

Kent Cummins, with Vance public affairs, said the military can give students a direction as well as teach them honesty, discipline and integrity.

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School counselors discuss military careers for students

By Robert Barron
Staff Writer

Since Sept. 11, attitudes toward America's military by many high school students has been transformed.

A group of high school counselors from around the state discussed military careers with Airmen and women Wednesday at Vance Air Force Base.

Bob Farrell, Vance chief of Community Relations, said he hopes educators will encourage high school students to consider the Air Force as a career after graduation.

Col. Doug Raaberg, commander of the 71st Flying Training Wing at Vance, spoke to the group about Vance's mission and challenged them to teach students to be great civil leaders.

"He said people are becoming less and less committed to their local governments.

"We need a resurgence of civil leadership," he said.

Raaberg told the group the United States Senate sends the nation to war while the president is commander-in-chief of the armed forces. All are civilians.

"Civil leaders are leaders by what they do, by their involvement," he said.

Raaberg said pilots trained at Vance are the best in the world partly because they train in all types of weather conditions and know how to fly anywhere.

Vance students spend 97,500 flying hours per year. In addition, active Air National Guard and reserve pilots are trained. Vance also trains Navy and Marine pilots and pilots from other nations, which makes it unique.

Speaking to the group were

Airman First Class Tyler Schachter, Tech. Sgt. Jade Mesa, Staff Sgt. Dave Spears, and 2nd Lt. Jason Bishop. Most young people who join the military are looking for the educational benefits, said Farrell.

Some have military backgrounds in their family and some don't.

Schachter worked for a short time after high school, then

joined the Air Force on the buddy program with some friends.

Mesa, a Missouri native, came from a military background. She spent a year in college and wanted something different and a way to get out of the small town where

she lived.

"I was interested in the benefits and I wanted to travel," she said.

Bishop, a college soccer player, went with his father to the recruiter.

"I wasn't really interested in college and I wanted to get out of town," he said.

The Air Force does not accept GED's, although Bishop, the northwest Oklahoma recruiter, said he has put people in with a GED, but slots for them are rare.

Some of the counselors asked why the Air Force did not accept GED's while other branches do. Farrell said there is no need to accept them when the Air Force can fill their recruitment quotas with a higher caliber recruit.

Schachter has spent much of his time in school since joining the Air Force. He is working on a double bachelor's degree and will

spend more time in the Air Force. His only expense is books.

When he receives his degree he will apply for Officer Training School and, if accepted, he will become an officer on completion of his training.

There are a number of programs offered by the Air Force that will make education available to service members, he said.

Mesa told the counselors she would tell young women she has gained self-respect in the Air Force. Before joining, she had jobs and was told by a boss she should be home raising children. Mesa has a degree in human resources and is working on a master's degree. There is some distance learning involved, but she also spends time on campus of the university she is attending.

"No one tells me I can't succeed," she said.

Schachter said he makes about \$1,250 a month and will be getting a significant raise, approved by Congress, early next year.

Mesa, who has been in the Air Force 16 years, makes about \$32,000 annually and receives \$600 a month living expenses living off the base with her family.

Spears said he makes about \$2,000 a month.

Bishop, a recruiter, said an E-1 makes about \$1,000 a month, while an E-3 makes more. Both are starting salaries, but the E-3 position is for recruits with more education, and depends on whether the recruit joins a four-year or six-year program.

All of those salaries are in addition to housing, commissary, insurance, and other support items.

The maximum age for recruits is 27, although waivers may be allowed up to 35.

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House lights pay tribute to Luke

All year, Luke Air Force Base planes pass directly over our house in Sun City in a solid stream between the hours of 8 and 10 p.m., after having spent many practice hours in the eastern desert.

You can hear their machines humming their "song of freedom" even as they pass over the solid darkness of the streets below.

To show our gratitude for their efforts, our house acts as a friendly landmark for them. It is completely covered with over 1,000 white Christmas-type lights every night during these hours — and we can readily imagine their waving and honking to us a few feet below in recognition of our appreciation for the dangers they are taking on our behalf.

In deference for the Christmas holidays, the display will not be displayed during the month of December.

LEWIS AND MARY SINGER
SUN CITY

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Support for Luke

To the caller who said more training is required for those dropping bombs in Afghanistan, this is another reason why we need more bases like Luke. Some people want to close down Luke.

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